

Message Text

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INFO USMISSION GENEVA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 02392

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, CSCE, UK

SUBJECT: UK VIEWS ON CSCE

REF: (A) GENEVA 731 (B) STATE 26935

1. SUMMARY. REF (A) SEEMED TO CONFLICT WITH OUR IMPRESSION OF UK ATTITUDES TOWARD CSCE BASED ON CONVERSATIONS WITH OFFICIALS IN EARLY FEBRUARY. BUT DISCUSSION WITH FCO OFFICIAL ON FEBRUARY 11 INDICATED THAT WHILE UK STILL TALKING HARD LINE, ACTUAL POSITION ON MANY CSCE ISSUES SOFTENING. THIS MIGHT BE PARTLY RESULT OF FIRST THOROUGH CSCE BRIEFINGS OF PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN SECRETARY FOR WASHINGTON AND MOSCOW. END SUMMARY.

2. WE FOUND REF (A) PROVOCATIVE BECAUSE, ON THE SURFACE, IT SEEMED TO BE IN CONFLICT WITH OUR IMPRESSION OF UK POSITION ON CSCE. RECENT CONVERSATIONS WITH FCO OFFICIALS, HOWEVER, TEND TO SUPPORT U.S. MISSION FEELING THAT UK IS NOW LOOKING TOWARD CONCLUSION OF STAGE II RATHER THAN
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CONCENTRATING ON WINNING ALL SUBSTANTIVE POINTS IN NEGOTIATIONS

TIATIONS. THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE OF BASKET III ISSUES BUT MAY APPLY TO CBM'S AS WELL.

3. ON FEBRUARY 11, WE MET WITH ROBIN MCLAREN OF FCO TO DISCUSS CSCE IN LIGHT OF FORTHCOMING WILSON VISIT TO MOSCOW. HE SAID THAT THERE IS "NOT MUCH DISPOSITION IN HMG TO GIVE WAY" ON BASKET III ISSUES. BUT HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT IT COULD BE SAID THAT THESE ISSUES ARE NOW SLIGHTLY LOWER IN PRIORITY THAN SOME OTHER ASPECTS. HE NOTED THAT BASKET III HAD NOT BEEN DISCUSSED AT ALL IN THE LAST EC POLITICAL DIRECTORS MEETING. THIS WAS PARTLY CAUSED BY FACT THAT DIRECTORS WERE REQUIRED TO TALK ABOUT PEACEFUL CHANGE, CBM'S AND BASKET II PROBLEMS BECAUSE OF IMMEDIATE DRAFTING PROBLEMS IN THOSE AREAS. IN BASKET III, ON OTHER HAND, MOST OF POINTS OF DIFFERENCE ARE "OPTICAL" AND ARE IN PREAMBLES. BASKET III PROBLEMS, MCLAREN SAID ARE NOT INSOLUBLE.

4. ON CBM'S MCLAREN TOOK HARDER LINE BUT EVEN HERE MCLAREN SAID "WEST IS GOING TO HAVE TO MOVE". UK IS BEGINNING TO GIVE SOME THOUGHT AS TO WHERE THIS MOVEMENT WILL HAVE TO COME. HE SAID THAT SATISFACTORY CBM'S STILL ARE REQUIRED FOR UK TO BE ABLE TO AGREE TO CONCLUSION OF STAGE II.

5. WHEN WE NOTED THAT HIS REMARKS SEEMED TO INDICATE THAT UK IS MOVING TOWARD SOFTER POSITION ON SUBSTANCE ON CSCE ISSUES HE HASTILY SAID THIS IS NOT TRUE. BUT ONLY EVIDENCE HE COULD MUSTER WAS THAT MINISTERS CONTINUE TO MAKE PUBLIC STATEMENTS STRESSING THAT THERE MUST BE REAL CONTENT IN A FINAL CSCE DOCUMENT -- THAT THERE IS NO "LACK OF INTEREST IN HMG" ON THIS SCORE.

6. THIS CONVERSATION REFLECTS A SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN UK ATTITUDE. AS RECENTLY AS TEN DAYS BEFORE THE MCLAREN CONVERSATION, CRISPIN TICKELL WAS TAKING THE OLD HARD LINE ON ALL CSCE ISSUES. WE SUSPECT THAT THE CHANGE MAY HAVE OCCURRED IN PART BECAUSE BOTH THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE FOREIGN SECRETARY WERE BRIEFED THOROUGHLY ON CSCE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN CONNECTION WITH THE WASHINGTON AND MOSCOW VISITS. (MCLAREN HAD TO PUT OFF OUR TALK FOR TWO DAYS BECAUSE OF MOSCOW BRIEFING PAPERS.) WE ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT CALLAGHAN HAD EARLIER SAID THAT UK OUGHT TO HOLD TO HARD LINE ON SUBSTANCE UNTIL MARCH OR APRIL BUT THEN MOVE TOWARD CONCLUSION AS PROLONGATION OF NEGOTIATIONS WOULD NOT BE PRODUCTIVE.

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COW VISITS. (MCLAREN HAD TO PUT OFF OUR TALK FOR TWO DAYS BECAUSE OF MOSCOW BRIEFING PAPERS.) WE ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT CALLAGHAN HAD EARLIER SAID THAT UK OUGHT TO HOLD TO HARD LINE ON SUBSTANCE UNTIL MARCH OR APRIL BUT THEN MOVE TOWARD CONCLUSION AS PROLONGATION OF NEGOTIATIONS WOULD NOT BE PRODUCTIVE.

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